

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

INSIDE:

The way to peace in the North

TURN TO PAGES 6 & 7

*** NO PAY FREEZE!**

*** SCRAP THE 1% LEVY!**

WE'VE HAD ENOUGH OF 'SACRIFICE'

THE bosses want to bleed us dry. That's the message coming from Bertie Ahern, the Coalition's Finance Minister.

Talks on the PESF broke down because the government refused to scrap the 1% levy. The Coalition demand that workers foot the tax bill so that their rich mates get off scot free.

After November's tax amnesty

hundreds of millions of hot money came back to Ireland.

The rich got an amnesty—but we got a levy.

But they also want to add insult to injury. Maurice Doyle, the head of the Central Bank claims that real 'fraudsters' in Ireland are social welfare recipients.

Doyle, who is married with four children, gets nine times what an equivalent social welfare recipient would get.

But he is determined to pave the way for new attacks that are coming on the unemployed in the January budget.

Conscripted

Leaked reports already indicate that the long term unemployed are to be conscripted onto miserable work schemes for the same type of pittance that students got over

the summer.

The Coalition are also demanding 'sacrifice' from public sector workers. They want to impose an effective pay freeze in 1994.

This is despite the fact that many low paid public sector workers are taking home as little as £120 a week while their top bosses in the civil service have seen their pay rise by 75% over the last five years.

It is time that we threw out this rhetoric about constant sacrifice. It

is time that our class started to put the boot in for a change.

This will mean that our unions are going to have to stop talking and start fighting. From now on every time any group of workers go into struggle we need to build maximum solidarity.

For that we need to build a strong network of socialists who fight for our class with the same determination that Reynolds and Ahern fights for theirs.

Students march against Tories

On 24th November, students from all over Ireland marched in Belfast to fight the Tory cuts.

The Tories are trying to push through voluntary membership for student unions.

"We have had enough. The Tories keep attacking us all. They have put VAT on fuel."

"They impose health cuts and now they are attacking student rights."

"It's time we showed the Tories what we think of them," said one student from East Belfast.

Voluntary membership

means an attack on the ability of unions to run campaigns to defend their members by cutting their funds.

It will also give a boost to sectarianism in Northern Ireland.

Today every college in the North is affiliated to both the British based NUS and the Irish based USI.

If Major gets away with voluntary membership each college will in effect have to state whether they go with either USI or NUS.

It will give a field day to the sectarians.

But the feeling for unity was shown with a tremendous demonstration of 2,000.

Maynooth gays fight back

SINCE 1988 students at Maynooth University have been registering their support for an officially recognised lesbian and gay society.

With a petition of over 400 signatures and with 200 members, this "unofficial society" maintains one of the strongest profiles in the University.

It has a most impres-

sive record in fund raising events for charity including "Blind Date" with "Silly Black" which has become one of the highlights of Rag Week and yet has continued to fall victim to the thinly veiled bigotry from the Catholic college authorities.

Refused

In the past, recognition from the authorities has been refused supposedly due to a mere

spelling mistake on the application form!

This year the "society that has always been but never (according to the Catholic authorities) was" will once again make application for recognition.

This year, if refused, a struggle will ensue.

Pledges of support have been coming in from each of the Lesbian and Gay Societies which exist in every other university in the country and the newly formed SWM branch in Maynooth will stand with them.

■ Brendan Payne (SWM Maynooth)

AIDS scandal rocks Europe

Europe has been rocked by a new AIDS scandal.

The German pharmaceutical firm UB Plasma has been cutting corners on blood screening leading to hundreds of deaths.

This follows the AIDS scandal in France where 300 haemophiliacs died in recent years after receiving contaminated blood from the national transfusion service.

In Germany 3 out of 10 patients in some areas have cancelled operations rather than risk contamination. Blood donations have fallen by a tenth since the scandal broke.

UB Plasma sells its products in several European countries

In Italy a senior health official said over 500 people have died there from contaminated plasma.

Dr Ulrich Moebius a Berlin based pharmaceutical expert says the scandal is "only the tip of the iceberg".

Accused

He has accused two other German firms of also cutting corners on blood screening.

Pharmaceutical firms are more concerned with making huge profits than with saving lives.

In Germany it is a £12 billion industry.

But their victims get very little compensation.

One Berlin man who was infected had to fight for years before getting a measly £400 a month pension shortly before he died.

Headstones daubed with swastikas

People in Hacketstown, Co Wicklow came across a shocking sight recently.

Twenty headstones in their local graveyard were defaced by Nazi swastika.

Sandblasting may now be the only way to remove traces of the aerosol paint.

Brid Smith, from the Anti-Nazi League, said:

"Incidents like these show why we have to be always vigilant."

"There are few open Nazis in Ireland at the moment."

"But some on the extreme right are looking across to Europe and are hoping to get a fascist group going in Ireland."

"This desecration should be removed immediately."



Parasite blames the poor

MAURICE Doyle, Governor of the Central Bank, is, we are told by the press, "a straight talker".

He blamed the problems of the economy on those on social welfare who he said were not genuinely available for work.

The man has a cheek.

Doyle with a wife and four children "earns" £57,287 a year.

An unemployed person in a similar position would get a miserable £142.30 a week - nine times less than Doyle.

He said nothing about the practice, revealed at the Beef Tribunal, of workers forced to sign on by their employers so as to cut the wages bill.

The companies that go into liquidation owing large sums of unpaid tax, PRSI and other debts were not mentioned.

Owing

The Innovation Group went into liquidation owing £75,000.

Yet the boss, Walshe, was swanning around in a company Rolls Royce costing £2,200 a month, his wife

had a company Daimler and they had use of a 34 foot company cruiser on the Shannon.

None of this was mentioned, because all this is perfectly legal.

He conveniently forgot the £35 million "lost" by the Central Bank as they gambled with the Irish pound at the beginning of the year.

The rake of business scandals from Greencore to Telecom were ignored.

The problem in this country is not the few on the dole doing nixers to make ends meet, but Maurice Doyle and his parasitic friends.



MAURICE Doyle, Governor of the Central Bank

PROFITS UP JOBS DOWN

The bosses at the Bank of Ireland are really celebrating.

Profits in the first half of 1993 have actually doubled over the previous year.

But the bank also shows that what's good for business is not so

good for its workers.

The same bank has just pushed through a voluntary redundancy package to get rid of another 300 jobs.

Meanwhile, 2,000 of its staff are still on the bank assistant grade.

The starting salary here is £161 a week before tax.

Poverty: the facts

Shocking figures on the scale of poverty in Ireland have been revealed in a recent report from the Justice Commission of the Conference of Major Superiors in Ireland.

They show that:

■ The proportion of people living below the poverty line in Ireland has increased by 39% from 1973 to 1987.

■ The salaries of the rich have

risen dramatically while those of social welfare have fallen far behind.

Top managers saw their salaries rise by 58% in the last six years. But those on social welfare went up by only 28%.

■ The number of households in Dublin in need of accommodation has increased by 18% in the last two years.

More than half of those on local authority housing lists are living on an income of less than £4,000 a year.

In Brief

★ UNIONIST controlled Belfast City Council has spent £3m on a hole in the ground.

This is how far the proposed concert hall has reached. And yet they are still undecided whether to proceed or not.

The money given out includes £1.3m to surveyors, £30,000 for a model and £5,200 to test the model.

★ "I stay where I am. Not an inch" -- Paisley's contribution to the peace proposals.

★ A recent survey by the Consumer Council has found:

■ On average a large loaf costs up to 40 per cent more in Northern Ireland than in Britain;

■ The price of a large white loaf has increased by 27 per cent since 1989.

★ THE Eastern Health Board has published a proposed list of hospital cuts showing its willingness to implement Tory attacks on the NHS.

It includes:

■ The merger of the Royal and City hospitals;

■ The closure of the Mater;

■ Cutting back of services in Lagan Valley, Downe and Belvoir;

■ Closing one of two maternity units.

The board has had its budget cut by £28m over the next three years.

★ MPs have voted themselves a 2.7 per cent pay rise at the same time they have urged public sector workers to accept a pay freeze.

Most DUP MPs abstained or didn't turn up for the vote whilst Ulster Unionist William Ross attempted to justify the increase.

As one angry woman said to the Belfast Telegraph: "We should stop all their wages for three months until they sort out the troubles!"

WE THINK

As Social Partnership deal break down: Make the unions fight!

Ever since 1987, there has been a social partnership deal between the unions, government and the employers in the Republic of Ireland.

Now it has broken down.

There are two different and contradictory reasons why the PESP has broken down.

Over the last year the union leaders were forced to respond to the mood of bitterness in their own ranks.

The Irish economy is the fastest growing economy in recession struck Europe at the moment. But workers keep getting asked to make sacrifices for no result.

According to ICTU President, Phil Flynn, if the unions had not gone in and demanded the removal of the 1% levy and the reversal of the dirty dozen cuts they could not sell a new deal.

But the bosses and the government also want to have a go.

Their main target is the public

sector where there are a quarter of a million of unionised members.

The crisis in public finances which is affecting every government in Europe means that they want

■ a public sector pay freeze
■ to impose full PRSI on all public sector workers

■ to break up the Conciliation and Arbitration scheme which allow public sector workers to get special claims to catch up with private industry.

Pressures

These pressures are tearing apart the lies that workers and employers can work together for the 'good of the national economy'

Both sides will now enter the big battles ahead with divisions and hesitations in their ranks.

According to Jackie Gallagher, the Industrial Correspondent of the Irish Times "the government believes that it is in a strong

position to take on the unions.

"However, the danger is that irreversible damage could be done to the process of consensus"

In other words, they are terrified of the costs of the battle they are provoking.

They are right to be afraid.

Solidarity strikes for the ambulance drivers and the dental assistants recently have inflicted defeats on the government.

But there are also weaknesses on our side. The union leaders are terrified of a fight.

The first task of every socialist is to stop them crawling back to Aherne.

If they crawl back now workers will get the worst possible deal.

Even if they remain outside a PESP type arrangement, the union leaders will want to contain any struggles.

They will always have one eye to getting back into their cosy arrangements with Aherne.

Here is where every socialist can play a crucial role.

We have to be organising in workplaces pushing the union leaders for action demanding solidarity with every struggle that break out.

A network of socialist militants can help put some backbone back into the unions.

That is why every reader of this paper should order a few extra copies to get around their workplace to help prepare for the battles ahead.



Solidarity action helped the EHB workers win.

Schools

F.F. keeps church in control

FIANNA Fail are trying to prevent any change in Church control of education.

A motion proposed by FF TD Ray Burke that any changes in government policy "will recognise the

role of the religious in Irish education" was passed unanimously by the parliamentary party.

Burke claimed that if education was to go a "totally secular" route, this would not "recognise where we are at in

Ireland at all!"

Where we are at is clear:

■ Over 3,000 national schools are controlled by the bishops;

■ Two out of every three second level students attend schools controlled by religious orders;

■ The state pays over 80 per cent of the capital and running costs of schools.

Over all of this parents have little or no say.

Yet every recent survey shows that given a choice, the majority of Irish parents would opt for a non-denominational school for their children.

Fianna Fail, playing to their right wing Catholic supporters, don't want us to have that choice.

BLOW TO BIGOTS

IRELAND's bigots have received another blow.

Fresh from their defeat on the abortion referendum, they set up an organisation called PASS—Parents against Stay Safe to oppose a programme in primary schools to warn children against abuse.

The bigots claimed that all talk about child abuse in holy Ireland was exaggeration.

On one occasion, the bigots even broke up an information meeting for Parents on Stay Safe in Crumlin.

But now a survey conducted by the Irish National Teachers Organisation has shown that 99 per cent of teachers are backing the scheme.

The bigots are becoming the fringe of the fringe

COUNCIL HARASSES TRAVELLERS

LAST month Dublin County Council dumped several tons of fertiliser beside the caravans of travelling families on the Fonthill Road, North Clondalkin.

The foul smell from the fertiliser is making life unbearable for the large community of travellers camped there.

This is a blatant case of harassment by Dublin County Council of travellers.

Traveller children must live and

play amongst this filth, which is extremely offensive and a health hazard.

The Tallaght and Clondalkin branch of the Socialist Workers Movement responded quickly with a petition in Clondalkin village and the North Clondalkin area.

Flynn excludes doctors

EC COMMISSIONER Padraig Flynn boasted recently that a new directive from the European Union would ensure a maximum average 48 hour working week and mandatory rest periods.

What he failed to reveal was that the Irish and British governments ganged up to exclude one group from this directive: junior doctors.

Junior doctors can spend up to 56 hours at work—with no provision for sleep—performing operations.

As Peadar O Grady, the honorary secretary of the IMO put it:

"Lorry drivers and pilots have maximum hours and mandatory rest periods. Why not doctors?"

Next time you hear the Irish government talk about its social conscience remember the junior doctors—especially if you are waiting for a hospital operation.

School students organise

SEVERAL young members of the Socialist Workers Movement and others last month started a campaign for free state exams.

Every family is asked to pay a £44 fee for sitting the Leaving Cert, regardless of income or ability to pay. The fee for the Junior Cert is £41.

The school students have written and distributed a leaflet calling for the fees to be abolished and education to be made entirely free.

They also aim to set up a national second level student body which would deal with any injustices in schools.

So far the response has been encouraging.

■ If you want to get involved contact School Students for Free Education, c/o 97 Botanic Road, Dublin 9.

After the Air France victory



Workers take action across Europe

WORKERS across Europe are fighting back against job cuts and attacks on their living standards. In the last two months workers in France, Italy, Germany, Spain and Belgium have taken action.

Europe is still deep in recession. By the end of 1994, 20 million people are expected to be out of work. The European Commission's own figures show that economic activity in the community will shrink again this year.

The response of governments has been to try to make the working class pay while protecting the profits of the rich.

Chancellor Kohl of Germany has claimed that his country is a 'leisurepark'. He blames 'shorter working hours, rising wages and ever longer holidays for the loss of competitiveness against the US and Japan.

Many European governments also face a huge public sector debt.

They tried to prolong the boom of the 1980s by massive borrowing. Now they are demanding a crack down on 'non-wage costs' to pay for it.

They claim that European workers have too much social welfare, too good a health service and too much money spent on their education.

But these cutbacks are provoking a new militancy among European workers. The biggest battle recently was in Air France. Here workers launched an all out strike, organised mass picketing and confronted the anti-union laws.

The workers forced Air France to abandon plans for 4,000 redundancies and wage cuts of £80 a week.

The battle in Air France also showed that workers had to go against the wishes of their own union leaders to win. The secretary of the CFDT, Francois Cabreia complained that "The longer this goes on, the less we can control the situation". It was because they could not control the situation, that the strike won.

The victory at Air France terrified the bosses of Europe.

As one Spanish industrialist put it "The climb down over Air France is the worst possible news for us because we have to do everything the French government is doing and more".

The lesson for Irish workers is that job and wage cuts can be fought by good "old fashioned" militancy.

Union leaders can be forced to call action by pressure from below—but workers need to be prepared to act independently when those leaders betray them.

Strike-torn Europe:

FRANCE

After the Air France strike, public sector workers held a day of action which was backed by 40 unions. They demanded that the government drop plans for plans to impose wage cuts and mass sackings.

Civil servants in France have also come out against plans to cutback on their pensions.

Over 20,000 students marched from Sorbonne to the national Assembly in Paris against overcrowding and plans to cut funds for education.

BELGIUM

Belgian workers staged a one day general strike for half a century on November 26th. The strike was in protest attempts to limit wage increase and cut the social security budget.

A huge protest march in Brussels brought thousands of workers onto the streets singing "The Internationale".

Belgian workers are now planning a second general strike for 10 December when the European Union holds its summit to discuss the Delors document on "Growth, Competitiveness and Employment".

ITALY

Around 14 million workers joined a four hour general strike, following weeks of stoppages and occupations. Over 50,000 marched in Turin, Milan and Naples. This was seen as the start of a mass campaign against cuts in health, education and pensions.

GERMANY

Ten thousand engineers struck in Mannheim in October. Another 10,000 walked out over a threat to sack pay at Mercedes. While miners in the giant Ruhr coalfield came out in a fight over jobs with 80,000 joining a demonstration.

SPAIN

Trade Unions staged a national demonstration at the end of November against the socialist governments plans to impose wage cuts. Steel workers are planning strikes over pay and conditions while car workers in Barcelona are set to strike over plans to sack 9,000 of them.

STOP THE ITALIAN FASCISTS

LAST months elections in Italy showed that governing parties are in complete crisis. Their candidates won only 15% of the vote.

The biggest victor was the PDS—the renamed Italian Communist Party. Candidates on its slate look set to take control of many of the major cities.

Backing

But the fascists have also made spectacular gains in recent elections. The MSI, which was founded forty years ago by associates of Mussolini, took 30% of the vote in elections in Rome and Naples.

Now key sections of the employers are looking towards the fascists. Silvio Berlusconi who runs most of the national TV channels, AC Milan and the Standa supermarket chain has given backing to the MSI.

A few months ago he had been talking about building a new movement which he called a "new aggregate of the centre". But now he wants a party that takes on the left.

Berlusconi's strategy of backing the MSI is still a minority one for Italian bosses.

They know that it is fraught with difficulty. This was shown when workers at Berlusconi's TV stations walked out for a half a day in protest at their bosses new pro-fascist sympathies.

The Italian workers movement is tremendously strong and militant. Throughout the last years there have been thousands

of strikes or demonstrations. In many cities there exist COBAS, rank and file committees, which organise independently of the union bureaucrats.

The fascists are still a long way from taking power because they still have to dare confront the strength of the workers movement.

In this situation the bosses are looking to co-opt

the PDS as their main hope for the future. The PDS has said that its only aim is to give the market a human face.

According to The Financial Times, "there is no reason why a PDS led government next year would produce policies fundamentally different from those undertaken by Ciampi—the present Prime Minister."

After the election the PDS leader Orchetti rushed down to the stock exchange to quell their fears.

But if the PDS are seen to manage the crisis of Italian capitalism this will only create new openings for the fascists.

That is why it is urgent that a force on the revolutionary left begins to emerge.

SOUTH AFRICA:

What will an ANC government be like?

NEXT April South Africa will hold its first non-racial elections.

Only a few years ago this would have been unthinkable. The racist apartheid system looked set to stay for many years.

It is a testament to the strength of black resistance that apartheid was forced to change. The main organisation of that resistance, the African National Congress (ANC), will get around 60% of the vote according to opinion polls.

But what will an ANC government be like? Nelson Mandela the ANC leader and probable future president has been bending over backwards to reassure the leaders of apartheid.

The future government will, he says "have Constand Viljoen, Ferdi Hartzenberg, De Klerk, maybe Buthelezi".

General Viljoen is head of the far right Afrikaner Volksfront and Harzenberg leads the pro-apartheid conservative party. Along with Buthelezi, leader of the murderous Inkatha movement, they form the "Freedom Alliance".

Inkatha has been responsible for the slaughter of hundreds of ANC activists, with the help of the security forces.

The Freedom Alliance has so far

refused to participate in the election, calling instead for racially based homelands. They have threatened civil war if they don't get their way. But this hasn't stopped the ANC negotiating with them.

De Klerk too has blood on his hands. In a recent speech to ANC supporters, Mandela admitted De Klerk was "conducting a war against blacks".

Throughout the negotiations the ANC has been trying to reassure big business. The "right to property" is guaranteed, meaning business will remain in the same, exclusively white, hands. It is difficult to see how this will satisfy the overwhelmingly poor black population, nearly half of whom are unemployed.

Although the transformation has been portrayed as a model of peaceful change, it has in fact been accompanied by the worst violence in apartheid history. Over 12,000 have died since 1990, many at the hands of the security forces.

An ANC government will find itself having to police the black townships in the interests of the white bosses. It will be completely unable to end the poverty of the mass of the population, because the ANC accepts the priorities of capitalism. Only a socialist society based on the powerful black working class can do that.

DEBATE

Why does the Labour Party fail?

A year ago the Labour Party made major gains in the general election. But since going in to coalition with Fianna Fail they have dashed any illusions that their working class supporters may have had in them.

So what is the future of Labour Party? The article is based on a debate at Marxism 93 between **RICHARD BOYD BARRETT** of the SWM and **TOMMY BROUGHAN** a Labour Party TD.

Richard Boyd Barrett (SWM)

At the last election the Labour Party received its biggest vote since the foundation of the State.

Fianna Fail was severely shaken. It received its lowest vote since 1927 - something socialists were delighted to see.

Why did the Labour Party win this historic vote?

The reason was that Fianna Fail had been exposed as the party of the millionaires, and not as the "party of the plain people" that it claimed to be.

A spate of scandals before the last election exposed the collusion between Fianna Fail and millionaires like Pino Harris, Dermot Desmond and Larry Goodman.

And it was not only politicians' friends but politicians themselves who were exposed as having abused their power in order to make money.

And while the government and their friends were busy getting rich they were at the same time telling workers to accept sacrifices.

They implemented the dirty dozen cuts, introduced means testing for higher education grants and reneged on the PESP increases.

Profits grew in this period but workers gained nothing from it and quite rightly Labour campaigned on these issues.

Because Labour expressed the legitimate anger of workers they gained the votes.

The result gave Labour a chance to split Irish politics along class lines. But instead of delivering a blow to Fianna Fail they threw them a lifeline.

Even left-wingers inside the Labour Party - like Emmet Stagg - went along with Dick Spring's decision to enter coalition.

Labour Party members gave as their reason for going into coal-



Dick Spring: Putting up a fight or betraying the workers?

tion the notion that they had to be "realistic" and that Labour had to "take this opportunity" of going into government.

A year on, the Coalition has carried on implementing the same policies as Fianna Fail did before the last election.

Look at Aer Lingus. During the election campaign, Dick Spring promised equity for the airline and said that jobs would be safe there.

A year on, one thousand jobs are threatened.

In the hospitals we had seen Fianna Fail introduce a £10 charge. Labour has not reversed this charge but has increased it.

Labour promised to do something about the Golden Circle and to act in favour of PAYE workers.

Instead we have a Tax Amnesty for the rich and a one percent levy for PAYE workers.

The new Coalition plan is the exact plan that Fianna Fail have been following for the past ten years.

Ruairi Quinn talks about the need to build up indigenous industry by means of grants and subsidies.

But between 1981 and 1990 the government handed over £4.66 billion in grants and subsidies and only created 7,000 jobs.

Even the Sunday Tribune, hardly a left-wing paper says that unemployment will only fall with another bout of emigration.

To cap it all the Coalition plans

to implement a Public Order Bill with draconian measures for anyone who engages in political opposition to the government's policies.

None of these things happen because Labour Party members are terrible people. The vast majority of Labour Party activists believed

Tommy Broughan (Labour)

After the last election my party ended up with 33 seats.

We had ten weeks of intense negotiations with the other main parties over forming a government.

A few of us - myself included - felt that the ideal thing was to maintain our independence. We wanted to tell the right wing parties "you make a government - its your responsibility".

Other comrades felt that if we stayed out of office there would very quickly be another election and with the help of the media Labour would be gutted. That would put us back to 20-25 seats.

We also had a possibility of a coalition with Fine Gael and the PD's. But the feeling was that the '83-'87 coalition with Fine Gael was so disastrous that a new arrangement with them was not a viable option.

So we were left with the Fianna Fail option. Many of us still have

reservations about that.

We allowed Fianna Fail to take the Department of Finance and the Semi-State bodies - that is the fundamental weakness. By giving such control to the main conservative party we put our whole strategy at risk.

And I accept a lot of what Richard is saying - even if the current Plan was implemented we would still be left with 300,000 unemployed.

I accept what you say about the 1 per cent levy - but we had hardly any input into last year's Budget where that was decided.

We are in a situation where the commanding heights are left in the control of Fianna Fail.

But we're implementing our programme and I think the Labour Party ministers deserve some credit for that.

For example Emmet Stagg has embarked on a programme of building 3,500 public houses per annum.

In education we've reduced the

rooms of big business and not in parliaments.

The social democratic strategy has failed.

The alternative is a Revolutionary strategy. Only workers organised in their workplaces can challenge the power of the capitalist class.

ratio already to 24 to 1 in primary schools.

In relation to Social Welfare about 9 or 10 of the Dirty Dozen have been dealt with.

Mevyn Taylor is working very actively to end inequality in relation to women, travellers and disability. The necessary legislation will be in place in a year to eighteen months.

It is reformism and is not fulfilling the aims Connolly laid down for us - but to some extent there is a programme being delivered.

Richard mentioned Aer Lingus - there is no conceivable way that Aer Lingus will be privatised while the Labour Party is in government. And we're prepared to defend the other semi-states and defend employment.

If Fianna Fail get their way we'll be devastated. On the other hand if we defend the working class we do have a chance that the Labour Party will hold its gains and continue to grow.

You have to be ready to fight a General Election at any minute. Our aim is to put up a serious fight and become the government.

Workers' unity against Tories rebuff peace

The press is full of talk of peace breaking out in Northern Ireland.

But Major and the Tory government in Britain are putting every possible obstacle in the way.

Major is dependent on the Unionist Party to vote for his anti-worker plans in Britain. He wants to make sure that VAT on fuel—the killer tax for old age pensioners—is pushed through. He wants to see the NHS ripped to shreds.

The Tories see their class war in Brit-

ain as far more important than peace in Ireland.

So Major pretends to act the statesman concerned to be the new Gladstone for Ireland. But all the time he connives with the bigots of the Unionist party to wreck every chance of peace.

■ The Hume/Adams peace plan was thrown out because the IRA have not "renounced terrorism".

But there is no difficulty talking to Ian Paisley who set up an organisation called Ulster Resistance after the Anglo-Irish agreement. Ulster Resistance went on to

ship in 90 tons of weapons from South Africa.

■ Both Major and the Unionists pretend that the major obstacles to peace are Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish constitution. These articles claim jurisdiction over Northern Ireland.

But no Southern government ever made the slightest move to "take over" Northern Ireland. They used these articles to develop the nationalist unity of the South. They wanted partition to help protect their own power base.

When Tony Benn was a Cabinet Minister he revealed that after a British cabinet commission was established to produce a feasibility study on a British withdrawal, the loudest voice of protest came from the Southern government.

Major and Molyneux point to Articles 2 and 3 because they want to disguise the real source of the violence in the North: the history of sectarianism and violence meted out to Catholic workers.

Molyneux wants to bring back a Unionist run assembly at Stormont to help get back to the good old days. To do that he is prepared to give the nod and the wink to the Loyalist death squads.

Molyneux claims that the Unionist "middle and professional classes" are in a state of panic. Fearful of any loss of their privileges, some have turned to arming and advising the UDA. They want it to be used as a bargaining chip if any overall settlement is attempted.

These moves show that the main obstacle to peace in Ireland has been the way Britain's rulers have propped up the sectarian filth of the Unionist party.

Why the IRA wants to drop armed struggle

The present opening for peace in Ireland has come because the republican movement wants to drop the armed struggle. They have realised that their present strategy has led to a complete dead end.

The IRA was born out of the struggle for civil rights in Northern Ireland. In 1967, the republican movement barely existed. The Derry republican commemoration that year could only draw 37 people.

In 1969, thousands of Catholics welcomed the entry of the British army because they thought it would protect them from a sectarian backlash.

But this changed after the Falls curfew in 1971 when soldiers shot five people dead and after Bloody Sunday when 13 were murdered.

After that a sizeable minority of Catholics supported the republicans for more than twenty years.

But the republicans turned their back on the mass struggle that had pushed forward the civil rights movement.

They argued that the armed struggle was the real "cutting edge".

They even claimed that 1974 would be the 'Year of Victory' when the British army would be pushed out of Ireland.

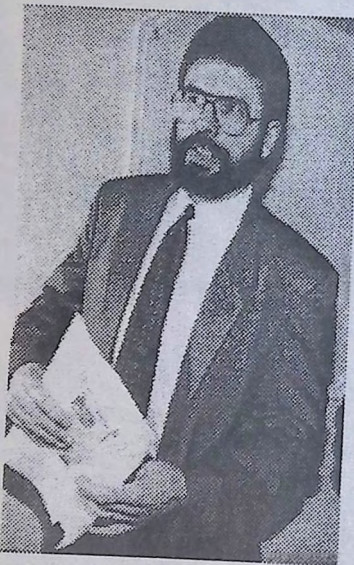
When the high hopes faded, a war of attrition seemed the only alternative. But this was not Vietnam or Zimbabwe where a guerrilla army could find a base among the peasantry and eventually bring victory by surrounding the cities.

The tactic of the armed struggle in Northern Ireland became increasingly counter-productive. It offered no way to take the anger beyond the Catholic ghettos.

If anything, the tactic of bombing predominantly Protestant towns pushed a minority of Protestant workers towards greater sympathy with the bigots of the UDA.

The IRA now want to follow the PLO in Palestine and the ANC in South Africa into reaching an accommodation with the system. There is nothing unusual in this.

Republicans like Adams will seek to follow the same path as people like De Valera. In its early days, Fianna Fail



Sinn Féin's Gerry Adams

too were militantly 'anti-Brit' and 'pro-worker'. But like Sinn Féin today their objective was not the overthrow of capitalism but only the adjustment of its boundaries.

Sinn Féin is already indicating that it has a new political agenda. Adams has attacked the "fiction that Sinn Féin is out to undermine the authority of the Southern state."

Joe Austin, the Sinn Féin leader in North Belfast claims that republicans operate like 'an exaggerated advice worker, social worker, confidant, all rolled into one'.

Socialists shed no tears for the ending of an armed struggle. In fact we will welcome the new opportunities that will emerge to operate across the sectarian divide more freely and to expose the class contradictions inside the nationalist community.

But with or without an armed struggle, republicanism needs to be challenged. It has failed to offer a way out of the oppression of working class Catholics. Its talk of more nationalist unity with Reynolds and Hume can only help the Catholic middle class.

Now is the time to build the socialist alternative.

COULD TALKS WORK?

Last month an Irish government document revealed long-standing thinking in elite circles about how the 'Irish question' might be settled.

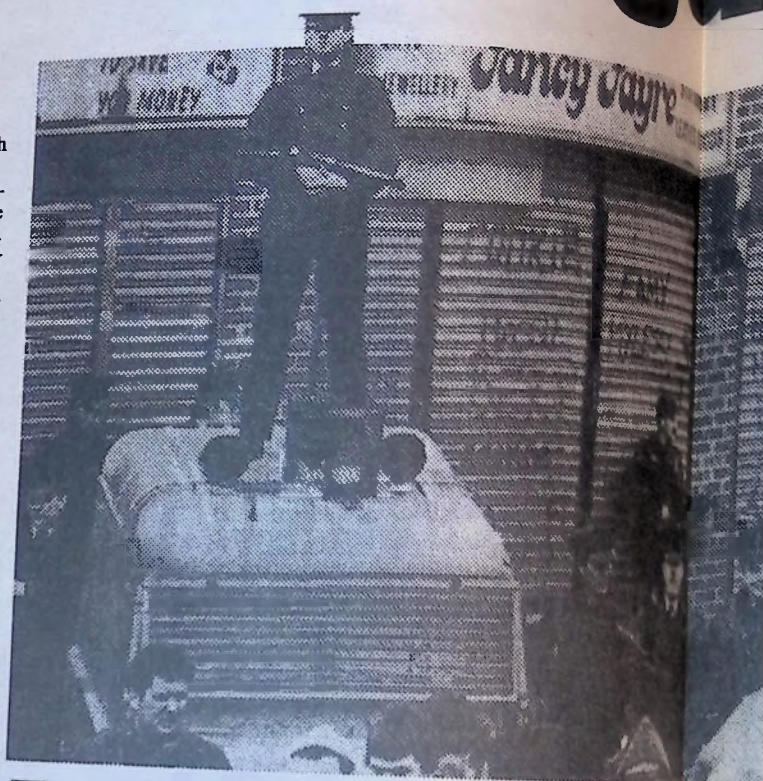
It called for a British declaration to recognise the value of a United Ireland; political structures inside Northern Ireland to recognise the nationalist identity; and moves towards joint sovereignty of the North by both Britain and Southern Ireland.

Although, the Hume Adams plan has not yet been revealed, there is every indication that it offers a stronger variation of this.

All these plans start from the notion that Protestants and Catholics will always have a separate identity which must be managed and policed.

They assume that all Catholics and all Protestants have something in common with their co-religionists. This is why they set up plans for institutionalising the divisions.

But any new structures would still be built on a foundation of misery and poverty. Neither British nor Irish capitalism have created the tens of thousands of jobs



WE THINK

Tens of thousands of workers in Northern Ireland have marched to demand peace.

The problem has been that the struggle for peace and the fight against the Tories have been kept separated by the union leaders. They think that Major can be coaxed into being a 'statesman' and come up with positive proposals for peace.

But the Tories are only interested in breaking any resistance to their rule. Right wing thugs like Norman Tebbit has even gone so far as to give succour to the death squads of the UFF by claiming that many ordinary Protestants are saying that "at least the UFF impose order around here".

The way to lasting peace is not to wait upon British or Irish politicians to produce vague declarations and more documents. Any settlement between a hated Tory government and an equally hated Southern government would cook up some way of keeping us living apart.

Fightback

The best way towards peace is a working class fightback. At one of the gigantic peace rallies in Belfast, the union leaders asked everyone to shake hands.

It was a gesture that could have been made by a priest or a minister. If, as well, they had said the handshake was a pledge to start a united fight against privatisation, against low pay and against untarianism.

What is needed in Northern Ireland today is a socialist organisation that fights for workers' unity against the sectarian state and the overthrow of both rotten states in Ireland in order to establish a socialist Ireland.

that would be needed to reverse discrimination against Catholics and still increase Protestant employment.

That is why every forum they create for recognising different identities, will become a platform for arguing about which community loses a hospital, or gets a new industry.

It will be a paradise for right wing politicians from both sides to build their power bases around competition with the 'other side'.

Any settlement that does not tackle the roots of the problem in a sectarian state and the failure of Irish capitalism will never be final.

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TO PEACE: Against sectarianism



Northern socialists speak out

Workers in the North have shown their anger against sectarian killings by taking part in big demonstrations. Here Socialist Worker interviews three Northern socialists—Goretti Horgan, Sean McVeigh and Jim Larmour—about prospects for building on that anger.

SW: What was the effect of the recent increase in violence?

SMcV: I'm 32 years of age and the last 6 months has been the worst period I've seen in terms of the absolute terror people feel, afraid to go outside their doors.

Even before the Shankill or Greysteel murders the papers reported at least one murder or attempted murder by loyalist paramilitaries every day in October.

JL: After Shankill and Greysteel every town in the North was deserted.

People were even afraid to go to the pub. Gigs were cancelled. People realised that it was no longer specific targets, but that innocent people were being killed.

GH: Where I work, people didn't want to travel, especially if they had to drive home in the dark.

I know one man who works in Harland & Wolff who was so worried about the fact that he cycled the same route to work each morning that he just took sick leave and even thought about leaving the job.

SW: Have the killings led to a deepening of sectarianism?

GH: In a strange way, I think it has led more to a feeling for peace than hatred.

Greysteel, coming on top of Shankill and all the killings that had gone before, brought it home to people just how close to the brink we were.

There was a fear it would go over the edge into a Yugoslavia type situation.

JL: Nobody where I worked glorified Greysteel.

They were completely shocked and said it would only lead to more bloodshed.

I was surprised at the number of people in East Belfast who said that we were all suffering the same; that it was working class people who were being slaughtered.

There's a real recognition, even if at a low level that its working-class people who are suffering.

SW: Tell us about the rallies that took place directly after Greysteel.

GH: The SWM in Derry pushed for the local Trades Council to call a rally to coincide with the one in Belfast on November 3rd.

We were clear that if it was called by the trades unions it had to be an anti-sectarian rally and that we had to look for strikes and industrial action to make it a workers rally.

That was incredibly easy to do. Unlike the Community Day of Action on November 18th, this didn't have the backing of the employers.

There were 10,000 - 12,000 people on the Derry rally, the biggest in nearly 20 years.

There wasn't one building site working in Derry on the Monday.

On one construction site, workers walked out on the Monday morning after Greysteel and didn't go back to work till the Thursday.

Workers were phoning our house to ask when were they to go on strike. They were expecting to be called out.

JL: We didn't have a strike in our workplace in 27 years, and this must have been the easiest strike ever to organise.

The argument was not whether to strike or not, but whether to join the Belfast rally or to organise one in the local town. In the end we did both.

This despite the fact that we faced vicious harassment; we were threatened with losing our bonuses; we were asked to do it on a Saturday and not during work time or to just have a minute's silence.

It became obvious to my workmates that the company was more worried about losing profits than about the killings.

It was important that we did strike so that workers can begin to understand the power they hold.

SMcV: If the Trades Unions had even called for a one-day general strike after Greysteel it would have happened across the board.

Even this would have made a huge difference in terms of confidence and even in being able to look your neighbours and fellow workers in the eye.

Instead they organised a fifteen minute rally during lunchtime in Belfast which meant that loads of workers actually missed it.

SW: What role did socialists play in these events?

SMcV: After the Catholic Shorts worker Jody Reynolds was shot by the UVF we distributed a leaflet to Shorts workers who are 90% Protestant.

It outlined the basic fact that this was a sectarian killing, aimed at dividing workers. It came at a time when Shorts are trying to lay workers off and drumming up



Thousands of workers united against sectarianism in Belfast

sectarianism to get away with it.

We made the link showing solidarity with their murdered Catholic colleague would show a united stand against their bosses.

Later that day, a thousand mainly Protestant workers walked out and held a rally in memory of Jody Reynolds.

These incidents show a glimpse of where the real hope for the future lies and in Catholic and Protestant workers uniting against sectarianism and against layoffs, in a very concrete way.

Socialists play a vital role in making those basic points all the time.

We managed to mobilise 150 students from Queens University to the rally on November 3rd.

GH: One thing that has been very noticeable is the heightened political atmosphere at the moment.

People are looking for political answers because they know they are being killed because of politics. The SWM slogan on

the Derry rally was "Fight the Tories, not each other", a slogan that really connected.

People were queuing up to take our leaflets, even taking bundles away to give to their workmates. There was a real hunger for politics and for answers.

The real tragedy that day was that there weren't enough socialists there, even to make sure that everyone on the rally got a leaflet and a copy of our paper.

JL: Obviously the basic desire for peace has to be viewed positively, but you see the Trades Union members saying to just leave it at this vague aspiration for peace.

Invariably, although peace movements surge up, they will fade away again just as quickly when they don't take on any of the basic issues.

That's where the role of socialists is so important, pointing to where the violence comes from and not just pretending that everyone can suddenly live in peace.

On the one hand there is a degree of pessimism, that every solution has already been tried.

On the other hand, because of the vacuum of ideas at the moment people are prepared to listen and are questioning everything.

Because they don't have the answers they are willing to listen to other arguments.

Our banner on the Belfast rally said "Workers Unite against Sectarian State".

It did have a resonance because people realise that you have to blame somebody other than Catholics or Protestants.

Despite sectarianism, absolutely everyone hates the Tories; its very different to Britain or the South in that regard.

SW: How did the Community Day of Action on November 18th compare to the earlier rally?

GH: In Derry, it was only half the size of the previous one although a lot more

the same bosses they struck against.

There was one incident in the Belfast rally that was significant.

This guy began to harangue an SWM member for carrying a placard about the VAT on fuel, saying it was no place for politics.

A group of women old-age pensioners nearby, who will probably be affected most by it, backed us up and started arguing with him.

It is possible to link the fight against the killings with the fight against the Tories.

Despite everything the mood has been positive. There is a real sense that people want change but this is often coupled with a sense of pessimism and disillusionment that its not going to go anywhere, and the frustration is siphoned off into support for the Peace Talks.

JL: In theory the employers supported this rally, but we had a different experience in our workplace.

The nearest rally for us was in Downpatrick, with a couple of thousand people there. Again, the mood was really passive.

Our employers didn't want us to leave work to go to the rally. In the end we staged a walkout and organised a bus to Downpatrick.

Only half the workforce came this time because they knew they were going to be docked one and a half hours pay; so much for the employers backing the rally.

The reason the mood was so different on the rallies this time was that it had been dampened down by the inertia of the Trades Unions.

They were afraid that the momentum which existed directly after the killings would get out of their control.

SW: How do socialists think the violence can be ended?

SMcV: Basically to end the violence we have to end the very system that created it in the first place.

Britain built the violent entity of Northern Ireland and it is with Britain we place the responsibility.

We also have to fill the vacuum that exists inside Protestant areas.

The vacuum that is now being partly filled by the paramilitaries who argue that Protestant workers are living in poverty because of Catholics.

In the desperate situation they are in, some will believe this, because they cannot see any alternative, and these bigots can strike a chord and find an audience.

That is why it is so urgent that we build the SWM North and South.

GH: We also need to link the fight against the killings with the fight against the Tories.

This isn't an abstract thing. The Tories are split ten different ways at the moment.

There is hardly anyone in the North whose job isn't under threat, who isn't affected by the VAT on fuel, by the rundown of the Health Services and the so called reform of the education system.

When other people talk about Catholics and Protestants coming together it is on a really artificial basis, where they come together as neighbours or come together on the basis of something like a minute's silence and then go back to live in their separate ghettos.

Also, if there is to be a chance for peace it has to be more than a nationalist peace process as in the Hume/Adams talks or a unionist peace process.

We identify something completely different; where Catholics and Protestants come together in a natural way - at work, and leave behind the fact that they're Catholic or Protestant.

It is as workers that they wield the power to take on the Tories and sectarianism.

SOCIALISTS MUST BE ORGANISED

by IAN TAYLOR



What kind of party do we need?

IF YOU want to change things in the world, you cannot do it on your own. You need to act with others who feel the same.

That is the basic reason for joining a political party.

Different parties aim to do different things. The Tories aim to maintain exploitation and the divisions in society. Labour wants only to alter this or that a little.

Their sort of parties are no good when you want to turn the world upside down.

A model of the kind of revolutionary organisation *Socialist Worker* wants to build is the Bolshevik party, developed in Russia and led by Lenin in the years up to 1917.

The reality of what Lenin and the Bolshevik party stood for could not be more different to the myths that have grown up since.

These myths of a secretive, conspiratorial group were built by Western rulers to discredit revolutionaries.

They were also fuelled by the monstrous Stalinist regime which grew out of the defeat of the 1917 Russian revolution.

So what did Lenin and the Bolsheviks really stand for?

At the core of Lenin's idea of a socialist party was the insistence that socialists had to relate to every workers' struggle.

Demonstrations and strikes were, Lenin argued, more important than elections, because they involved workers fighting for themselves.

But the Bolsheviks didn't simply throw themselves into every workers' struggle.

They also insisted on maintaining and arguing for firm socialist principles, however unfashionable and unpopular that was at times.

They understood that the possibilities for socialists, and therefore the kind of organisation needed, had to change quickly as the class struggle ebbed and flowed.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks understood that when workers were not fighting, socialists would necessarily be a minority within the workers' movement.

This was certainly the case when the Bolsheviks were founded in the early years of this century.

Pull together a minority

RUSSIA WAS a dictatorship ruled by a relative of the British royals—the Tsar. There were no elections and hardly any established trade unions.

Yet Lenin understood that Russian workers had enormous power. They would inevitably be pushed to struggle over wages, hours, conditions, whatever it might be.

What was needed was a party to draw together the minority of socialists now, and be ready to win wider layers of workers to a fight against the system when bigger struggles erupted.

That party began to take shape after a split among Russian socialists meeting in exile in 1903.

On the one hand were those, dubbed Mensheviks, who wanted something big and broad like a British Labour Party.

On the other were those around Lenin who saw the need for a party in which "every member is responsible for the party, and the party is responsible for every member".

Lenin took the name Bolshevik—meaning "majority"—at this time.

Yet the Bolsheviks began very small. There were fewer than 300 in the capital St Petersburg in early 1905.

But the Bolsheviks had an organisation

and were able to shift rapidly when suddenly, in 1905, a huge upheaval swept Russia.

The 1905 Revolution began when troops fired on a demonstration led by a priest. It led to a general strike, to the setting up of the first workers' council and to a failed uprising.

When the process began, Lenin was in exile and the Bolsheviks had hardly started to organise.

Suddenly tens of thousands of workers through their own experience began to see the possibility of real change.

Lenin insisted the party also had to change quickly.

"Open the gates of the party. Get rid of all the old habits. Form hundreds of circles and encourage them to work full blast.

"All we have to do is recruit more young people more widely and boldly, more boldly and widely."

Struggle is the key

THE BOLSHEVIKS grew to tens of thousands within a few months.

They grew, said Lenin, by "the ability to agitate unceasingly, to participate in every strike, to respond to every demand of the masses".

In the end, the working class proved too raw and the party too young. The revolution failed.

But the experience was vital to the success of 1917. Lenin later called it the "dress rehearsal".

"Millions gained practical experience of a mass revolutionary struggle", he wrote. "1905 will come again."

Defeat, nonetheless, brought a period of awful reaction.

The party was banned and its leaders driven into exile again. The number of strikes collapsed and so did party membership.

In Petersburg it shrank from 8,000 to fewer than 400, in Moscow from over 5,300 to 150.

It was the most difficult period of the Bolsheviks' history. Once again the party had to change. With workers defeated socialists would of necessity be a minority.

But it was no good simply packing up and waiting for the great days of struggle to return.

It was vital to "preserve and develop revolutionary principles in this phase too, on this bend of the road".

In practice, they did not have long to wait.

In 1911 student protests spread to the factories, and the number of strikes grew through 1912, 1913 and 1914 to involve hundreds of thousands of workers.

The Bolsheviks flourished again.

We need a paper

THROUGHOUT ALL the ups and downs a socialist newspaper was at the centre of the Bolsheviks' work and organisation.

The paper was the backbone vital to

the very existence of the party. It was not just to carry news and socialist arguments but to be a "collective organiser".

Distributing the paper and building its network of readers was vital to building the party and its influence.

Lenin compared the paper to, "the scaffolding round a building under construction".

At times when there was little struggle the paper was vital to maintain socialist arguments and organise party members.

But when the struggle was growing the paper had to change.

In 1912 as the workers' movement erupted again the Bolsheviks founded a daily paper, *Pravda*.

Lenin spelled out how it must be a workers' paper.

It should give "some idea how the workers of various trades and various localities are fighting", and raise "one after another, the various questions of workers' life and working class democracy".

The struggle was temporarily cut short by the outbreak of war in 1914, only to erupt with new force in 1917.

Then came the triumphant vindication of the Bolsheviks as first workers revolted and overthrew the Tsar, then went on to win workers' power.

The Bolsheviks grew to a mass socialist workers' party of hundreds of thousands and played a crucial role in leading the revolution to victory in October 1917.

It was able to do so only because it had adapted to high points and low, to periods of isolation and those of massive growth.

It had to "seize the time" when there were opportunities, and hang on at others.

Tragically within a few years the 1917 revolution was strangled because it stayed isolated in Russia.

The principle reason for that was that elsewhere in Europe socialists had failed to build the kind of party Lenin and the Bolsheviks had built in Russia.

But the Bolshevik Party that led the 1917 revolution can be our inspiration in the fight to win socialism today.

The story of the Bolshevik Party is explained in greater detail in the first volume of Tony Cliff's four books on Lenin—Building the Party (price £8.50 post free from SW Books, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8)

THE MEDIA AND DRUGS:

High on hysteria

THE shooting dead of a suspected drug pusher in inner city Dublin has brought renewed attention to the city's latest drug problem.

There has been an increase in the use of hard drugs, mainly heroin, in Dublin's inner city. It is not hard to see why. In the Liberties area of Dublin where drug use is high, 70 per cent of youth are unemployed. Only 1 per cent can expect to get to third level education.

People who take drugs are looking for an escape from the situation they find themselves in.

But drug use is clearly linked to illness and death, if you are working class. A heroin addict, for example,

needs nutritious food, a warm clean environment and clean needles. Few of the inner city addicts get these things.

The poverty of Dublin's inner city mean that they often share needles. So 47 per cent of AIDS patients contracted the disease through intravenous drug use.

Offered

For the rich it is a different story. A Ben Dunne or a Michael Jackson are offered the best of care to keep them safe and wean them off the habit.

Instead of discussing solutions to help drug addicts, the media whip up hysteria. They ignore the fact the two biggest killer drugs in Ireland are quite legal and socially acceptable — cigarettes and

alcohol.

Every year 5,000 people die from smoking related disease in Ireland. At any one time one third of hospital beds are occupied by someone with a smoking related complaint.

But cigarettes are big business. Gallaghers made £289 million profit in 1991.

Alcohol is also addictive. It has been estimated that 95,000 people in Ireland are alcoholic. It is also the drug that is most connected to violence.

A survey in Britain of casualty wards showed that 86 per cent had been drinking alcohol.

But attacking alcohol or cigarettes does not have the same political effect as other forms of drug hysteria. The politicians and media want to convince people that the biggest problem society has are

'drug crazed thugs'.

They hope that the anger about unemployment and poverty can be deflected off into a fear about drugs. This is why the *Evening Herald* which is owned by the press baron, O Reilly, runs a *Crimewatch* series.

Concerned

Of course drug abuse is a problem. Heroin is a dangerous drug. Working class people who already have to worry about the dole and bad housing are understandably concerned that their kids might also become hooked on heroin.

But throwing a few pushers out of an area is not a solution. The same pushers are more often hooked on drugs themselves. When they were forced out of one area in the

Liberties, they only moved a few hundred yards down to another working class housing estate.

The politicians and Gardai are quite happy to see working class people turn on each other — as in scenes shown on RTE recently of working class people dragging youths who smoked cannabis up before an assembly to explain themselves.

Socialists do not encourage people to use drugs. But we want real solutions not fake ones to the problems that now exist. Instead of throwing people out of areas, there should be properly funded therapy centres which people are encouraged to use on a voluntary basis.

Most importantly, there should be a fight against the very system that drives some people to abuse drugs in the first place.

What we stand for

Workers create all the wealth in capitalist society. A new society can only be constructed when they collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution.

FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be reformed out of existence. Parliament cannot be used to end the system. It has to be overthrown.

The machinery of the capitalist state—parliament, courts, army, police etc.—is there to defend the interests of the capitalist class, not to run society in a 'neutral' fashion.

To destroy capitalism, workers need to smash the state and create a workers' state based on workers' councils.

FOR REAL SOCIALISM, EAST AND WEST:

The SWM welcomed the break-up of the USSR and the end of the East European dictatorships. These states were not socialist but were run by a state-capitalist class. Workers' revolutions are needed to win real freedom in the East.

We are against the domination of the globe by imperialist powers and we oppose their wars. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination.

FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION

We oppose all forms of oppression which divide and weaken the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women.

We stand for: free contraception and free, legalised abortion and the right to divorce; the complete separation of church and state, an end to church control over schools and hospitals; an end to discrimination against gays and lesbians; an end to racism and anti-traveller bigotry.

We argue for working class unity in the fight against oppression.

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH:

Northern Ireland is a sectarian state, propped up by the British Army.

Catholic workers are systematically discriminated against by the state. The division between Catholic and Protestant workers weakens the whole working class.

Workers' unity can only be won and maintained in a fight to smash both the Northern and Southern states.

We stand for the immediate withdrawal of British troops. Violence will only end when workers unite in the fight for a workers' republic.

FOR A FIGHTING TRADE UNION MOVEMENT:

Trade unions exist to defend workers' interests. But the union leaders' role is to negotiate with capitalism—not to end it.

We support the leaders when they fight but oppose them when they betray workers. We stand for independent rank and file action.

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY:

To win socialism socialists need to organise in a revolutionary party. This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system. The SWM aims to build such a party in Ireland.

What's On

Branches of the SWM meet around the country at the following times and venues

Athlone

Meets every Tuesday.
For details of time and venue write to the SWM national address.

Dublin North Central

Meets every Wednesday
8pm Conway's Pub
Parnell St
Wednesday 7th: Black Liberation and Socialism

Dublin Northside

Meets every Tuesday
8pm The Old Brogue,
Dorset St
Tuesday December 7th:
Is Human nature a
barrier to socialism
Tuesday December 14th:
Can aid help the Third
World?

Dublin South Central

Meets every Thursday
8pm Trinity Inn Pearse St
Thursday 11th: Date Rape: What do socialists say?
Thursday 18th: After Italian elections: can fascism come to power again?

Dublin Southside

Meets every Wednesday
8pm The Junction Pub in Camden St
Wednesday 10th: Law and Order: Will it stop Crime?
Wednesday 17th: The Third World: Does Aid and Charity Help?

To contact the SWM in Bray, Coleraine, Cookstown, Drogheda, Dundalk, Galway, Kilkenny, Limerick, Maynooth & Navan, write to SWM PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Phone (01) 872 2682 or PO Box 103 Belfast 15 2AB

Tallaght/Clondalkin

Meets every Wednesday
8pm Tallaght Welfare Society next to Foxes Covert in Tallaght village
Wednesday 10th: The Fight against Fascism in Europe
Wednesday 17th: Real socialism versus Stalinism

Waterford

Meets every Thursday
8pm ATGWU Hall, Keyser St
Thursday 9th: Are all men sexist?
Thursday 16th: How did Stalin get power?
Thursday 23rd: Xmas Social in Old Rogue

Belfast

Meets every Tuesday
8pm See SW sellers for details or contact national office
Tuesday 7th: Can Socialism Liberate Women
Tuesday 14th: Why you should be a socialist
Tuesday 21st: What do socialists want for Xmas?

Derry

Meets every Tuesday
8pm Badgers Pub Orchard St
Tuesday 7th: The Politics of Sex
Tuesday 14th: Chile Twenty years on—why we need revolution
Tuesday 21st: What socialists want for Christmas

Cork

Meets every Tuesday
8pm Anchor Inn, Georges Quay
Tuesday 7th: Why the

Labour Party Fails

Tuesday 14th: Will the recession ever end?

Socialist Worker Day School for SWM members and supporters: Womens' Liberation and Socialism

Sunday December 12th
Kinlay House, Lord Edward St Dublin
12.00: Class Society and the oppression of Women
1.45: Rape, pornography and violence: what is the socialist answer?

3.15: Strategies for Women's Liberation

Contact PO Box 1648, Dublin 8 or Phone (01) 872 2682 for more details

Socialism alive and kicking

Remember all the talk about 'socialism was dead' or that 'the youth were now more

apolitical'?

In November over 250 people registered to attend a conference on

Marxism in Ireland.

This annual event has become of the biggest discussion meetings on left wing ideas in Ireland.

Two extremely lively meetings were held with SWM debating Tommy Broughan, the Labour TD from Dublin North East on "What future for the Labour Party" and with Colm Regan from Trocadero on "Can the UN be a force for peace".

Afterwards nine people joined the SWM.

The recent expansion of SWM has led to a splitting of branches in Dublin.

Two years ago, SWM had one major branch in Dublin. Now five branches have been established.

The days when socialists had to meet in large gatherings and work out their ideas are over.

It is now time to engage

in concrete activity.

The new branches of SWM will be engaged in estate sales and developing links with key workplaces in their area.

Typical of the new branches is Tallaght/Clondalkin.

Last month Dublin Corporation dumped manure at a travellers settlement hoping to stir up prejudice against travellers.

Tallaght/Clondalkin SWM responded with a petition at local supermarkets and a housing estate.

Response

One SWM member reported:

"We got a very sympathetic response.

"Working class people hate this sort of blatant injustice."

SWM has also been active in fighting the Public Order Bill.

It helped to organise the first major street protest against the Bill in November.

Gardai tried to intimidate those on the protest by parking their video van beside the gathering and filming those present.

Afterwards six people joined the SWM.

In Belfast and Derry, SWM members have been on the streets attacking the VAT on fuel tax.

On the day of the British budget both branches organised pickets after contacting a number of pensioners' groups.

If you hate the system and want to get organised, you should join the SWM.

Fill in the form on this page to get more details of our policies and activities.

WARNING: THIS BILL COULD DAMAGE YOUR RIGHTS

The government is trying to sneak through one of the most repressive laws in years.

■ If you are part of a group of 12, you could be sent to prison for ten years if anyone of 'reasonable firm mind' feels intimidated by your group.

This could be used to stop any street protest.

■ Anyone carrying an abusive placard can be locked up for 6 months

Does that mean a placard with the word 'scab'?

■ For being drunk in public, you could get a £500 fine.

Tell that to the Irish football team supporters. Order copies of the *Socialist Worker* fact sheet on this bill for £1 per 100 post free from P.O. Box

Join Us!

If you would like to join the SWM or receive more details, send this slip to: SWM, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Tel: (01) 872 2682 or PO Box 103 Belfast 15 2AB

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

**Roddy Doyle's new book
reviewed by Mick Doyle**

Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha

THE Booker Prize would have seen by many interested in literature as one of the most pretentious affairs of the year: a self-indulgent session for the literati, an opportunity to prattle on about books nobody would understand if they bothered to read them.

But things might actually be changing. It was recently won by Patrick McCabe's "The Butcher Boy" and this year Roddy Doyle's "Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha" took it.

It is not uncommon these days to see academic types in threadbare tweeds and mufflers pause to browse over the Paddy Doyle display in Easons before scurrying away.

"Paddy Clarke" is easily the best book Roddy Doyle has written to date.

It's cold and serious with none of the superficiality or theatrics of his trilogy.

Some readers will find the style difficult. It is written in his usual short, straightforward fashion.

But the narrator skips from one topic to another in a way that can be irritating and confusing.

Another criticism would be how the author views the new council house children. He seems to see them as unapproachable, emotionless and savage.

It would be fine in the context of this novel, but it's a feature of Doyle's earlier work as well.

Despite this though, it's a poignant and beautiful account of working class boyhood. It takes you into their world, into their minds.

You'll follow Paddy Clarke and his gang down building site trenches, through sewerage pipes and across fields that are fast disappearing.

Torture

You'll see them as cowboys and Indians. You'll watch them torture and kill small animals and birds, and tease each other with a boy's cruel curiosity.

You'll remember your own school days, if you ever managed to forget them, with sickening clarity: the scars, the sarcasm and the commands barked out in Irish.

And all the time Paddy Clarke's world is falling apart. There's conflict between his parents.

He catches snatches of rows and witnesses instances of violence.

He stays awake at night praying for the fighting to stop and falls asleep during the day at school.

He plans to run away but his father leaves before he can carry out his plans.

The novel ends rather abruptly and leaves the reader wanting more.

Perhaps a sequel is in the offing—let's hope so.

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**Willie Cumming reviews a new edition of
Eamonn McCann's 'War and an Irish Town'**

From Civil Rights to Republicanism

EAMONN McCann's classic *War and an Irish Town* has just been re-published with a new introduction.

When it was first published in 1974, the period of the Civil Rights Movement was over. Republican, nationalist politics dominated.

For a young person, impressed by those early days and looking to socialist politics, the question was why had things changed so dramatically—from the initial anti-sectarian, anti-Tory placards, to the Tricolour and the bomb?

Focusing in on the experience in Derry, the book is in two parts. The first is an account of how the movement for civil rights was built and developed.

Background

The second is a more general background to the history of the Northern state.

Northern Ireland from its very beginning was a sectarian state. Sectarianism was not something added later to the mixture but was central to its very existence.

By the careful drawing of electoral boundaries even areas with Catholic majorities elected unionist dominated councils.

And those that controlled local government also controlled access to housing and local authority jobs.

In Fermanagh, for example, with a population 54.3 per cent Catholic, only six of the 66 County Council Administrative Officers were Catholic.

In Derry—so as not to upset the

electoral arithmetic - Catholics could only get housed in the Bogside or Creggan.

And, strangely enough, the number of houses built there was less than in the rest of the city.

The situation was for long sullenly accepted.

By the late sixties things were changing. Although still second class citizens, the welfare state extended from Britain, gave some measure of material security.

Increasing numbers of Catholics went on to third level education.

Expectations were raised. Perhaps it would be possible to change things within Northern Ireland.

And so the civil rights movement was born.

But marches were met with police batons, water cannon and tear gas. The sectarian apparatus of

the state was exposed in all its viciousness.

If it was not possible to reform the state, the very existence of the state had to be questioned.

The issue of partition and nationalist politics once again became central.

Rule

But a change of rule from London to rule from Dublin would do nothing to improve the levels of poverty and unemployment affecting working class people, both Catholic and Protestant, in Northern Ireland.

As McCann puts it:

"Only a socialist perspective holds out any hope of freeing the Catholic working class into a society in which the Protestant working class would rejoice to live."

"Only the vision of a socialist future can outshine the votive lamps of Catholic nationalism and the bonfire blazes of Orange defiance."

"And in the shorter term, only a class perspective holds out hope of bringing large numbers of people together on specific issues now."

It was to emphasise the central importance of class rather than communal politics and the need for a revolutionary socialist party that this book was written almost twenty years ago.

Today the same view applies.

As the blurb on the cover says: "If you read no other book on Northern Ireland, you should read this."

■ *War and an Irish Town*, by Eamonn McCann, Special offer price: £7.95 plus £1.50 p & p from SW Books, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8.



Books for Xmas

TIRED of watching the umpteenth rerun of *Gone with the Wind*? A good book makes an ideal change.

Socialist Worker has compiled this list of books that would make good presents and will help you get through the twelve days of Christmas.

If you haven't read it yet, top of your list should be Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*, (£11.50).

At over 1,200 pages it certainly looks a bit daunting. But once you're into it you fly along.

No other other book describes as well as Trotsky

himself put it, "the direct interference of the masses in historic events". Essential and rivetting reading!

September 1968, 25 years ago, saw the first issue of the weekly *Socialist Worker*, the paper of our sister organisation in Britain, the Socialist Workers Party.

Downfall

In the Heat of Struggle (£9.95) is a selection of articles and photographs from those 25 years.

From Free Derry Corner to the Great Miners' Strike and Thatcher's downfall, this is one to dip into over and over again.

Science, we are told, is the objective assessment of facts. Class bias doesn't enter into it.

Yet the biography *Darwin* (£9.95) by Desmond and Moore paints quite a different picture.

They describe brilliantly Victorian society in fear of the emerging working class.

It was that fear that prevented Darwin from publishing his theory of evolution for twenty years. This book ranks among the best books I read last year.

A cheap must for every stocking is Paul Foot's new book *Why you should join the Socialists* (£1.90).

It's a great answer to all those who believe that soci-

ety can never change and that capitalism is the best we can aspire to.

Another inspiring read is CLR James' *The Black Jacobins*. Haiti today is known as one of the poorest countries of the world.

What is less known is that the world's only successful slave revolt occurred here in the late 18th century.

Led by an ex-slave, Toussaint L'Ouverture, the black slave armies defeated the armies sent to crush them by France and Britain.

■ All books available from: SW Books, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8. Add £1.50 for postage and packaging except for Paul Foot's book which add 50p for p & p.

Nestlé

WORKERS in Nestlé in Tallaght are resisting attempts by management to attack jobs and conditions.

The company plans to move office staff from its subsidiary, Rowntrees, into a new £2 million office block in January.

As a result of this "integration", 15 jobs will go and working hours will change radically.

Pay scales are also set to change. One worker has been asked to take a five-year freeze on increments!

Management tried to pressurise workers into accepting voluntary redundancy without knowing the terms.

Revealed

When the package was revealed, it offered much less than in 1991, when a similar rationalisation was pushed through.

Office workers have an outstanding claim for £800 dating back to then.

They are determined not

to even discuss the new plan until that claim is settled.

"If we don't fight for it now, we can kiss it goodbye" said one.

Factory workers are equally angry at plans to contract out the canteen and cleaning.

They fear this could lead to further job losses in security and transport.

Unity between different sections of workers in Nestlé is essential if the company's plan is to be stopped.

Equally important is unity between workers in Nestlé and Rowntrees.

The only ones to benefit from divisions will be management.

The first step to building this unity would be to hold a meeting of all union members in both companies to plan a joint fightback.

PAT THE BAKER:

ICTU must impose blacking

The eight month old dispute at Pat the Baker is coming to a head. Management have agreed to talk to SIPTU, a major concession. There are complaints from the workers in Granard who have been getting £25 a week less since the strike started.

The balloting for the blacking of Pat the Baker products by workers has been completed. All supermarkets voted in favour of blacking.

Yet there is a problem. SIPTU are refusing to call action due to the low turnout at the ballots in some supermarkets.

IDATU and the INUVGATA are following suit so there is a real chance that the blacking will not happen.

It is farcical that after waiting eight months, offering excuse after excuse for not balloting Quinnsworth and Crazy Price workers, the ICTU may back down

from escalating the strike at exactly the point when managements resolve is looking shaky.

The reason the turnout for the ballots was so low is partially due to Quinnsworth management using intimidating tactics - for instance a large number of ballots had to be held in the supermarket car parks after closing because managers would not let them take place on the premises.

But over all the responsibility lies with the leadership of the unions. They did not give clear support to supermarket workers to stand up to intimidation. They did next to nothing to build for a vote in the strikers favour,



leaving everything to stewards on the ground, many who were not informed of the details of the dispute and received more leaflets from Pat the Baker management than from the union.

Response

Some Crazy Prices though unionised do not have a shop steward and so were left to their own de-

vices. It is in these places that the turnout was the lowest.

The public support for the strikers is as high as ever, as shown by the response to the leafletting of supermarkets and collections. Yet the union leadership have done nothing to turn this support into action.

The strike could win easily if the union calls the blacking action and pro-

ceeds to build it by organising stewards in the supermarkets properly and sending the strikers round to meet the workers in the shops—something that hasn't happened for at least four months.

If the strike doesn't win then the leaders of SIPTU are the ones to blame and the job of building union organisation in this country will be that much harder.

Pizza Hut

THIRTY TWO members of SIPTU in Pizza Hut in Tallaght went on strike at the end of November.

They were demanding payment of the legal minimum wage for catering workers—at present some are paid as little as £1.50 an hour.

Nor do they get double time for Sunday as is their due.

The workers also want cooks and waitresses regraded upwards.

The owner of Pizza

Hut has refused to talk to SIPTU.

He also threatened to use members of his family as scab labour.

Management at the Square Shopping Centre backed him up by restricting the strikers to only three pickets at each entrance.

Despite these difficulties, the strikers succeeded in shutting Pizza Hut entirely when the strike started, and were confident that their strike would bring a quick victory.

Du Pont

Over 200 workers are fighting for their jobs at Du Pont in Derry - with little help or encouragement from their fulltime union officials.

183 of the workers are from the Polymer Engineering (PE) section, the rest are in the catering department. They are not redundant in any sense of the word. Their work will remain, but Du Pont wants to expand the use of outside contractors, so as to cut wages, conditions and safety standards.

There is now increasing anxiety on the operations side about Du Pont's long-term commitment to the Derry plant itself.

One of the reasons the bosses felt confident enough to cut the jobs is that

in recent years union officials have backed down over and over again as Du Pont management put the boot in on workers. When the workers wanted to fight, full-time officials sabotaged them.

At the beginning of October the PE workers voted in a secret ballot by 136 to one for an overtime ban, in protest against a cut in their hours which left many £50 a week short.

Valid

Disgracefully, AEEU official Del Adair tried to argue that the vote was invalid and even jeered in the street at one of the workers, saying that they had no chance of winning.

This disgusting behaviour was typical.

The workers are on 90-

day notice, which expires in February. This period should be used to get solidarity action from workers in operations. This is in their own interest because they'll be next in line if Du Pont's arrogant management get their way over the PE and catering "redundancies".

It's past time for all Du Pont workers to say that enough's enough, and the best way to say that is outside the gate on a picket line. A one day strike to force management to reverse the sackings would be an excellent start.

The workers should demand full, official union backing for whatever action proves necessary. But neither union officials nor Tory anti-union laws should be allowed to hold back the struggle for the jobs.

With private contractors crawling all over British Telecom, 600 job losses threatened at Northern Ireland Electricity and up to 2,000 in the civil service, etc. etc. the need for a rank and file fightback has never been more urgent. All workers in the North West should be giving the Du Pont workers their full support.

Peamount

HOUSE Parents caring for the mentally handicapped have recently ended their strike at Dublin's Peamount hospital.

Their stoppage received very little publicity and so many of the scandalous conditions at the hospital did not come to light.

One staff member is responsible for the care of 28 mild to moderately mentally handicapped people.

Staff are meant to work a 13 hour day on Saturday and Sundays on alternate weekends.

Aer Lingus

At the time of going to press, most sections of Aer Lingus workers voted to accept the Cahill Plan.

Union leaders decided to recommend acceptance following the government's offer to make 5 percent of shares in the group available to the workforce.

This was despite the recommendation of a tribunal that the workforce must take a two-year pay freeze. This means workers will be denied pay rises of up to 10 percent due under the PESP.

In return, they will get 5 percent of the shares now and the equivalent of a further 5 percent spread over a number of years. Pay rises will then be backdated from 1996.

What the stockbroking union leaders failed to point out was that if the group fails to return to profitability, the share offer will be worthless.

Aer Lingus will soon need to replace some of its aircraft. This will wipe out a large chunk of "distributable profits".

Clever-clever tactics could lead to the workforce voting for a pig in a poke. Adopting the militant tactics of the Air France workers could have stopped Cahill in his tracks.

NIPSA

TWENTY four thousand civil servants in Northern Ireland struck for 24 hours last month against market testing which is aimed at cutting 2,000 jobs.

The strike brought out workers in the DHSS, Housing Executive, Job Centres and

Vehicle Testing sectors.

Market testing is the first stage of privatisation.

Up to 1,000 workers marched to the City Hall in support of a campaign to prevent the job losses called by the public sector union NIPSA.

Ward International

THIRTY three SIPTU and TEEU strikers at Ward International in Athlone are calling on the ICTU to place an all-out picket on the company.

The company makes machinery for the paper printing industry.

The strike began in August when management tore up existing agreements on pay and conditions.

It has held strong for the last three months, and has even been supported by non-union truck drivers who refused to pass pickets.

Bribe

One of the strikers told *Socialist Worker* that a manager tried to bribe a driver to pass the picket.

The driver refused, saying:

"I have nothing to gain from the strikers' hardship".

The Athlone Trades Council has set up a strike fund.

This is sorely needed by the strikers in the run-up to Christmas.

However, they also need more firmness from their unions.

So far, the company has refused to go to the Labour Court. SIPTU has said that if it does, the pickets will be lifted.

This will only give the company a chance to undermine the strike.

Getting an all-out picket from Congress would be more likely to bring victory.

Dublin Corporation

FOUR hundred Housing Maintenance Staff in Dublin Corporation are being threatened with privatisation unless they agree to end so called restrictive practices.

This is nothing more than an attempt by management, pushed by government minister Emmet Stagg, to force an over stretched and dwindling workforce (600 less than in the mid 80's) to accept attacks on their conditions of work.

Despite Emmet Stagg's assurances that his calls for a shake up in work practices was aimed at management, they are being used to make manual

workers suffer.

Management are engaging in a widespread campaign of intimidation, resulting in one alleged assault by an inspector on a carpenter, 5 days suspension for another carpenter for swearing at the same inspector. And two other threatened suspensions on other workers, all going to appeal, one charge of being absent from his job was has been dropped after being proved false by a tenant.

Foremen are being instructed by inspectors and senior management to tell their men that work is not going fast enough, despite their complete ignorance of what the work actually involves.

The conditions of Corporation workers are far

from acceptable without the attacks from management. The 400 workers cover over 30,000 flats and houses.

Metal containers costing over £10,000 each are being used as canteens instead of depots. The structures have no heating or ventilation; in Milltown it took a fight by safety and health representative Martin Malone from BATU to even get seats and some cooking facilities put in one of the containers.

The attacks need to be resisted. A general meeting of all workers is planned for this month and meetings of shop stewards have already taken place to start to organise resistance—UCAIT Shop Steward

Socialist Worker

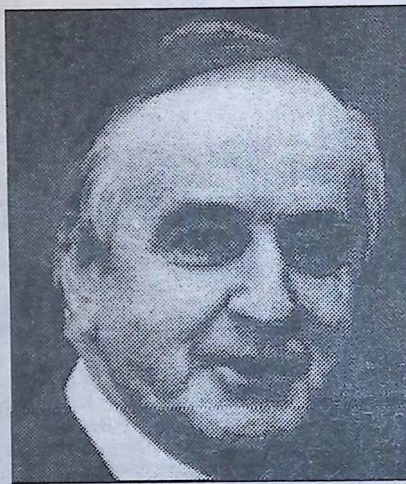
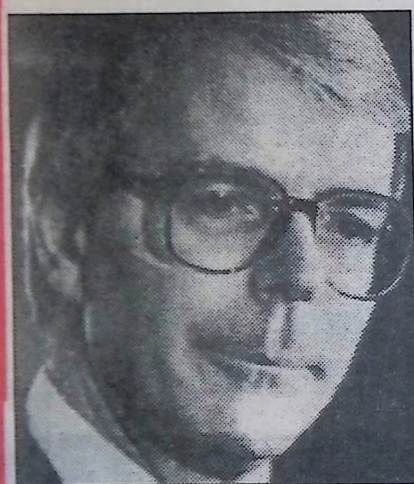
For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

INSIDE:

Workers take action across Europe

TURN TO PAGE FOUR

These men condemn violence but slam the door on peace



Left to right: John Major, Albert Reynolds, Patrick Mayhew, Jim Molyneux

BLOODY HYPOCRITES

**The way to peace—
Workers' unity against
sectarianism:
Turn to pages 6 & 7**

For the last two months Major and Mayhew have stymied peace efforts by saying that they could never talk to the IRA.

They have been ably assisted by Reynolds and Molyneux.

Major even claimed that it "would turn his stomach" to talk to the IRA.

But all along contacts be-

tween Sinn Fein and the British government were continuing on a weekly or even on a daily basis.

These contacts had been fully authorised by the Tory squire, Patrick Mayhew.

Nobody should be in the least surprised.

The British government has never had the slightest qualms about using violence.

Its bombers massacred tens of thousands in Iraq dur-

ing the Gulf war.

Even today children are dying from the cluster bombs dropped by the RAF.

Its security service knowingly allowed Brian Nelson to import the huge stock of weapons from South Africa for use by the UDA.

The public front about not talking to the IRA was pure hypocrisy. They used it to dismiss the Hume/Adams initiative out of hand.

The Tory politicians and

their allies in the South only see the violence of the North as inconvenient because it increases their security bill.

They don't care about the hundreds of working class people who are killed and injured.

Inflict

Peace for them only means the right to inflict more hardship on us.

They can't wait to impose

VAT on fuel even though it will lead to the death of more pensioners and tear up safety laws because they cost too much money.

There will be no lasting peace in Ireland if we wait on right wing politicians to get together an agreement that is meant to police us in our separate camps.

The only way forward is workers unity. We need to fight together against the Tory vandals who want to

privatise and slash our living standards.

For that struggle to win, Catholic and Protestant will also have to fight the two rotten little states which exist North and South.

Politicians talk a lot about the 'two traditions' on this island.

It's time we reminded them of a much better tradition—that of workers unity that sees the Tories and the bosses as the real enemy.